

"Letitia," said he, in a loud, friendly tone, "Letitia, cease to shed tears; I die happy, for I see you surrounded by all your children. My life is no longer necessary to the children of my dear Charles; I can therefore die. Joseph is at the head of the administration of the country, and he will know how to take care of what belongs to his family. You, Napoleon," continued he, with a louder voice, "you will be a great and exalted man."\*

His eyes turned on Napoleon, he sank back on the cushions, and his dying lips murmured yet once more, "*Tu serai unomone!*"

After the body of the worthy great-uncle had been laid in the grave, Napoleon left Corsica to return to France and to his regiment, for the time of his leave of absence had expired.

For the second time the lips of a dying man had prophesied him a great and brilliant future. His dying father had said that one day the sword of his son Napoleon would make all Europe bow under the yoke; his great-uncle had prophesied he would be a great and exalted personage.

To these prophecies of the dying is to be added Mirabeau's judgment, which called Napoleon a genius of the first stamp.

But this great and glorious future was yet screened under dark clouds from the eyes of the young lieutenant of artillery, and the blood-dripping hand of the Revolution was first needed to tear away these clouds and to convert the king's lieutenant of artillery into the Emperor of France!

\* "*Tu poi, Napoleon, serai unomone,*" such were the words of the dying man, assures us King Joseph in his memoirs; whilst Las Casas, in his memorial of St. Helena, makes Napoleon relate that his uncle had told him, "You, Napoleon, will be the head of the family."

## CHAPTER VIII.

## A PAGE FROM HISTORY.

THE dark clouds which hung yet over the future of Napoleon Bonaparte, the lieutenant of artillery, were gathering in heavier and heavier masses over all France, and already were overshadowing the throne of the lilies.

Marie Antoinette had already abandoned the paradise of innocency in Trianon, and when she came there now it was to weep in silence, to cast away the mask from her face, and under the garb of the proud, imperious, ambitious queen to exhibit the pallid, anxious countenance of the woman.

Alas! they were passed away, those days of festivity, those innocent joys of Trianon; the royal farmer's wife had no more the heart to carry the spindle, to gather eggs from the hens' nests, and to perform with her friends the joyous idyls of a pastoral life.

The queen had procured for herself a few years of freedom and license by banishing from Versailles and from the Tuileries the burdensome Madame Etiquette, who hitherto had watched over every step of a Queen of France, but in her place Madame Politique had entered into the palace, and Marie Antoinette could not drive her away as she had done with Madame Etiquette.

For Madame Politique came into the queen's apartments, ushered in by a powerful and irresistible suite. The failure of the crops throughout the land, want, the cries of distress from a famishing people, the disordered finances of the state—such was the suite which accompanied Politique before the queen; pamphlets, pasquinades, sarcastic songs on Marie Antoinette, whom no more the people called their queen, but already the foreigner, *L'Autrichienne*—such were the gifts which Politique brought for the queen.

The beautiful and innocent days of Trianon were gone; no longer could Marie Antoinette forget that she was a queen! The burden of her lofty position pressed upon her always; and, if now and then she sought to adorn her head with roses, her crown pressed their thorns with deeper pain into her brow.

Unfortunate queen! Even the circle of friends she had gathered round her person only urged her on more and more into the circle which politics had traced around her. In her innocence and thoughtlessness of heart she imagined that, to a queen as to any other woman, it might be allowed to have about her friends and confidants, to enjoy the pleasures of society, and to amuse one another! But now she had to learn that a queen dare not have confidants, friends, or social circles!

Her friends, in whose disinterestedness she had trusted, approached her with demands, with prayers; they claimed power, influence, and distinctions; they all wanted to rule through the queen; they all wanted through her to impose laws to king and state; they wanted to name and to depose ministers; they wanted their friendship to be rewarded with embassies, ministerial offices, decorations, and titles.

And when Marie Antoinette refused compliance with their wishes, her beautiful friends, the Duchesses de Polignac, wept, and her friends, Messieurs Vesenval, Vaudreuil, Coigny, and Polignac, dared be angry and murmur at her.

But when Marie Antoinette consented—when she used her influence with the king, to satisfy the wishes of her friends, and to make ministers of her *façon*—then the queen's enemies, with loud, mad-dog cry, lifted up the voice and complained and clamored that it was no more the king but the queen who reigned; that she was the one who precipitated the nation into wretchedness and want; that she gave millions to her friends, whilst the people were perishing with hunger; that she sent millions to her brother, the

Emperor of Austria, whilst the country was only able to pay the interest of her enormous debt; that she, in unrestrained appetite and licentiousness, lived only for pleasure and festivities, whilst France was depressed under misery and want.

And the queen's enemies were mightier, more numerous, and more loyal one to another than the queen's friends, who were ever ready to pass into the camp of her foes as soon as Marie Antoinette gratified not their wishes and would not satisfy their political claims.

At the head of these enemies was the king's brother, the Count de Provence, who never forgave the queen for being an Austrian princess; there were also the king's aunts, who could never forgive her that the king loved her, that by means of this love to his wife they should lose the influence which these aunts, and especially Madame Adelaide, had before exercised over him; there was the Duke d'Orleans, who had to revenge himself for the disgust and dislike which Marie Antoinette publicly expressed against this vicious and wild prince; there was the Cardinal Prince de Rohan, whose criminal passion the queen had repelled with contemptuous disgust, and who had paid for this passion one million francs, with imprisonment, shame, and ridicule. For this passion for the queen had blinded the cardinal, and made him believe in the possibility of a return. In his blindness he had placed confidence in the whisperings and false promises of the insidious intriguer Madame de la Motte-Valois, who, in the queen's name, asked from him a loan of a million for the purchase of a jewelled ornament which highly pleased the queen, and which she, notwithstanding her exhausted coffers, was resolved to possess.

Yes, love had blinded Cardinal de Rohan, and with blind eyes he had accepted as letters from the queen those which Madame de la Motte brought him; and he could not see that the person who gave him a rendezvous in the gar-

dens of Versailles was not the queen, but only a common, vicious woman, who had been clothed in the queen's garments.

The queen had been travestied into a wench, and the highest ecclesiastical dignitary of the land was the one who took this wench for his queen, was the one who, with a rendezvous, a kiss on the hand, and a rose, was rewarded for the million he had given to the jeweller for a necklace of diamonds!

It is true, the deception was discovered; it is true, it was Marie Antoinette herself who asked for a strict investigation, who with tears of anger required from her consort that this horrible intrigue which had been woven round her person should be investigated and judged publicly before the Parliament; that the Cardinal de Rohan should be punished for the criminal insult offered by him to the queen, since he thought her capable of granting him a rendezvous, of exchanging with him letters of tender passion, and of accepting gifts from him!

But the Parliament, which recognized the guilt of Madame de la Motte, which ordered her to be whipped, branded, and driven out of the country as an impostor and a thief, the Parliament declared the Cardinal de Rohan innocent; all punishments were removed from him, and he was re-established in all his dignities and rights. And the people, who in enormous masses had besieged the Parliament buildings, welcomed this decision of the judges with loud demonstrations and shouts of joy, and carried the cardinal in triumph through the streets, and honored and glorified him as a martyr and a saint.

This triumph of the cardinal was an affecting defeat to the queen; it was the first awful testimony, spoken loudly and openly, by the popular sentiment.

Hitherto her enemies had worked against her quietly, and in the darkness of night; but now, in open day, they

dared launch against her their terrible accusations, and represent her imprudence as a crime, her errors as shameful and premeditated wickedness. No one believed in the queen's innocency in this necklace transaction; and whereas Cardinal de Rohan had been made a martyr, whereas Parliament had declared him innocent, the queen consequently must be the guilty one, to whose cupidity the cardinal and the unfortunate Madame de la Motte and also the beautiful D'Olivia, who in this horrible farce had played the part of the queen, had been sacrificed.

The name, the character, the reputation of the queen, had been trodden down in the dust, and the Count de Provence, who himself composed sarcastic songs and *pasquinades* against his royal sister-in-law, and had copies of them circulated through the court, reflected not that in calumniating the queen and exposing her to the scorn and ridicule of the world he thereby shook the throne itself, and imperilled the awe and respect which the people should have had for the monarchy. And all the other mighty dignitaries and foes of Marie Antoinette did not calculate that in exciting the storm of calumny against the Queen of France, they also attacked the king and the aristocracy, and tore down the barrier which hitherto had stood between the people and the nobility.

Hitherto pamphlets and sarcastic songs only had been directed against the queen; but now, in the year 1787, all France was to re-echo a pamphlet launched against the nobility and the whole aristocracy.

This pamphlet was "The Wedding of Figaro," by Beaumarchais. The habits of the aristocracy, of the higher classes, were in this drama castigated and thrown to the scorn, ridicule, and laughter of all France. Every thing which the people hitherto had held sacred, was laughed at in this drama; all the laws of manners, of rank, of morality, were scorned at, hissed at; and, under this hissing, appeared

in full view and with fearful veracity the rotten and poisoned condition of the so-called upper classes of society.

It was in vain that the censor declared the publication illegal, and prohibited the representation of "The Wedding of Figaro." The opposition took advantage of this measure, and since it could not be published, hundreds of copies were circulated; and, if it could not be represented, its reading was listened to. It soon became fashionable to attend at the readings of "Figaro's Wedding" and to possess a copy of the drama. Even in the queen's social circle, in the circle of the Polignacs, this dangerous drama was patronized, and even the queen was requested to use her influence upon the king for its representation.

This general clamor, this tempest of the public opinion, excited even the king's curiosity; and as everybody attended the readings of Beaumarchais' drama, the crowned heads had also to bow to the fashion. Madame de Campan had to read before the king and the queen this renowned "Wedding of Figaro," so that the king might give his decision. The good-natured countenance of the king darkened more and more, and during Figaro's monologue, in which the different institutions of the state are ridiculed, especially when, with words full of poison and scorn, the author alludes to state-prisons, the king rose angrily from his seat.

"It is a contemptible thing," cried he, vehemently. "The Bastille must be destroyed before the representation of this piece would not appear as a dangerous consequence. This man ridicules every thing which in a state ought to be esteemed and respected."

"This piece will not then be represented?" asked Marie Antoinette, at the close of the reading.

"No, certainly not!" exclaimed Louis, "you can be convinced of it; this piece will not be represented."

But the clamor, the longings for this representation were

more and more loudly expressed, and more and more pressing. It was in vain that the king by his decree forbade its already-announced representation in the theatre of the *menus plaisirs*. Beaumarchais cried aloud to the murmuring audience, who complained very loudly against this tyranny, against this oppression of the king, the consoling words: "Well, sirs, the king desires that my drama be not represented here, but I swear that it will be represented, perhaps even in the chancel of Notre Dame."

It was soon apparent that Beaumarchais' words and the wishes of the public opinion were stronger than the words and the wishes of the king and of his highest officers. The king himself felt it and acknowledged it soon; he shrugged his shoulders compassionately when the chancellor of the seal, adhering still to his opposition, would by no means consent to the performance of the drama.

"You will see," said Louis, with his own soft, good-natured smile—"you will see that Beaumarchais' credit is better than that of the great-seal bearer."\*

The king's prophecy was correct—Beaumarchais had more credit than the chancellor! His powerful patrons in high places, and all those who made opposition to the king and queen, and at their head the Count de Provence, banded together to have this piece publicly represented. The king's consent was elicited from him by the assurance made public that Beaumarchais had stricken out of his drama all the offensive and captious parts, and that it was now a mere innocent and somewhat tedious piece.

The king gave his consent, and "The Wedding of Figaro" was represented at the *Théâtre Français*.

The effect of this drama on the public was a thing unheard of; so enthusiastic that Beaumarchais himself laughingly said: "There is something yet more foolhardy than

\* "Mémoires de Madame de Campan," vol. i., p. 279.

my piece, and that is, its result"—that the renowned actress Sophie Arnold, in allusion to this, that the opponents of this drama had prophesied that it would fall through, exclaimed: "The piece will fall through to-day more than fifty times one after another!"

But even this prophecy of the actress did not reach the full result, and the sixtieth representation was as crowded as the first. All Paris wanted to see it, so as to hiss the government, the nobility, clergy, morality. There was a rush from the provinces to Paris for the sake of attending the representation of "Figaro's Wedding;" and even those who hitherto had opposed the performance, pressed forward to see it.

One day Beaumarchais received a letter from the Duke de Villequier, asking of him as a favor to give up for that evening his trellised box in behalf of some ladies of the court, who desired to see "Figaro" without being seen.

Beaumarchais answered: "My lord duke, I have no respect for ladies who desire to see a performance which they consider improper, and who wish to see it under cover. I cannot stoop to such fancies. I have given my piece to the public to amuse and not to instruct them, not to procure to tamed wenches (*béguenles mitigées*) the satisfaction of thinking well of the piece in a small trellised box, and then to say all manner of evil against it in public. The pleasure of vice and the honors of virtue, that is what the prudery of our age demands. My piece is not double-faced. It must be accepted or repelled. I salute you, my lord duke, and keep my box."\*

All Paris chuckled over this letter, which was circulated in hundreds of copies, as the drama itself had circulated at first. Every one was convinced that it was the queen who wanted to attend the representation of "Figaro" in the

\* "Correspondance de Diderot et Grimm avec un Souverain."

trellised box; for it was well known that the queen, angry at monsieur for having been present with all his suite at a representation in the box reserved for the court, had openly declared: "Could she come to the conclusion of seeing this drama, she would only see it through a small trellised box, and that without any ceremony."

In laughing at the letter of Beaumarchais, the ridicule was directed against the queen, who had been refused in so shameful a manner. But Marie Antoinette did not wish to be laughed at. She still hoped to overcome her enemies, and to win the public sentiment. She requested an investigation, she insisted that the Duke de Villequier should openly acknowledge for whom among the ladies of the court he had asked for the box; that Beaumarchais should publicly confess that he had not dared suppose his words were directed against the queen.

The whole matter was brought to an end by an arbitrary decree. Beaumarchais was compelled publicly to acknowledge that his famous letter was directed neither to a duke nor to a peer, but to one of his friends, whose strange request he had thus answered in the first flush of anger. But it is evident no one believed in this explanation, and every one felt pleasure in referring to the queen the expression of "*béguenle mitigée*."

Paris, which for a whole winter had laughed at a theatrical piece, and was satiated with it, was now to assist at the first scene of a drama whose tragical power and force were to tear France asunder, and whose continuance was to be marked by blood and tears.

This important drama, whose opening followed closely Beaumarchais' drama, exhibited its first scene at Versailles at the opening of the States-General on the 5th of May, 1789. All Paris, all France watched this event as the rise of a new sun, of a new era which was to break upon France and bring her happiness, salvation, and strength. A new,

an unsuspected power entered with it upon the scene, the *Tiers Etat*; the third class was, at the opening of the States-General, solemnly recognized as a third power, alongside of the nobility and clergy. With the third class, the people and the yeomen entered into the king's palace; one-half of the people were to make the laws instead of having to submit to them.

It was Marie Antoinette who had endeavored with all her influence on the king that the third class, hitherto barely recognized, barely tolerated, should appear in a two-fold stronger representation at the States-General; it was the queen also who had requested Necker's recall. Unfortunate woman, who bowed both pride and will to the wishes of public opinion, who yet hoped to succeed in winning again the people's love, since she endeavored to meet the wishes of the people!

But this love had turned away from her forever; and whatever Marie Antoinette might now do to exhibit her candid wishes, her devotedness was not trusted in by the people, who looked upon her as an enemy, no longer Queen of France, but simply an Austrian.

Even on this day of universal joy, on the day of the opening of the States-General, there was no desire to hide from the queen the hatred felt against her, but there was the resolve to show her that France, even in her hour of happiness, ceased not to make opposition to her.

The opening of the States-General was to be preceded in Versailles by divine service. In solemn procession the deputies arrived; and the people who had streamed from Paris and from the whole region round about, and who in compact masses filled the immense square in front of the palace, and the whole street leading to the Church of St. Louis, received the deputies with loud, unbroken shouts, and met the princes and the king with applause. But no sooner was the queen in sight, than the people remained dumb; and then,

after this appalling pause, which petrified the heart of the queen, the women with their true instinct of hatred began to cry out, "Long live the Duke d'Orleans! Long live the people's friend, the good Duke d'Orleans!"

The name of the duke thus derisively thrown in the face of the queen—for it was well known that she hated him, that she had forbidden him to enter into her apartments—this name at this hour, thrown at her by the people, struck the queen's heart as the blow of a dagger; a deathly pallor overspread her cheeks, and nearly fainting she had to throw herself into the arms of the Princess de Lamballe, so as not to sink down.\*

With the opening of the States-General, as already said, began the first act of the great drama which France was going to represent before the eyes of Europe terrified and horrified: with the opening of the States-General the revolution had begun. Every one felt it; every one knew it; the first man who had the courage to express it was Mirabeau—Mirabeau, the deputy of the Third Estate, the count who was at enmity with all those of his rank, who had solemnly parted with them to devote himself to the people's service and to liberty!

On the day of the opening, as he entered the hall in which the States-General were convened, he gazed with scrutinizing and flaming eyes on the representatives of the nobility, on those brilliant and proud lords who, though his equals in rank, were now his inveterate enemies. A proud, disdainful smile fluttered athwart his lips, which ordinarily were pressed together with a sarcastic and contemptuous expression. He then crossed the hall with the bearing of a conqueror, and took his seat upon those benches from which was launched the thunderbolt which was to dash to pieces the throne of the lilies.

\* See "Count Mirabeau," by Theodore Mundt. Second edition, vol. iii., p. 224.

A long-trying friend, who was also a friend of the government and of the nobility, had seen this look of hatred and anger which Mirabeau had cast upon the gallery of the aristocrats; he now approached Mirabeau to salute him, and perhaps to pave a way of reconciliation between the prodigal Count de Mirabeau and his associates in rank.

"Think," said he, "my friend, that society is not to be won by threats, but by flatteries; that, when once injured, it is difficult to effect a reconciliation. You have been unjust toward society, and if you look for forgiveness you must not be obstinate, but you must stoop to ask for pardon."

Mirabeau had listened with impatience, but at the word "pardon," his anger broke with terrible force. He sprang up, stamped violently on the floor with his feet; his hair which, like a lion's mane, mantled his head, seemed to bristle up, his little eyes darted flashes, and his lips were blanched and trembling, and with a thundering voice he exclaimed: "I am not here to implore pardon for myself, but that others should sue for mercy."

Was Mirabeau himself willing to grant pardon? Had he come with a reconciling heart into this assembly, where people and king were to measure their rights one against the other?

As the good King Louis this day entered the hall, in all the pomp of his royal dignity, to welcome the States-General with a solemn address, Mirabeau's eyes were fixed on him: "Behold the victim," said he.\*

From this day the struggle began—the struggle of the monarchy against the revolution, of the liberal party against the reaction, the struggle of the people against the aristocracy, against every thing which hitherto had been legitimate, welcomed, and sacred!

\* Theodore Mundt: "Graf Mirabeau," vol. iv., p. 15.

A new day had broken in, and the prophetic mind of the queen understood that with it came the storm which was to scatter into fragments her happiness and her peace.

## CHAPTER IX.

### JOSEPHINE'S RETURN.

To rest!—to forget! This was what Josephine sought for in Martinique, and what she found in the circle of her friends. She wanted to rest from the pains and struggles which had agitated the last years of her life. She wanted to forget that she still loved the Viscount de Beauharnais, though rejected and accused, though he had treacherously abandoned her for the sake of another woman.

But he was the father of her children, and there was Hortense with her large blue eyes and her noble, lovely countenance to remind Josephine of the father to whom Hortense bore so close a resemblance. Josephine's tenderheartedness would not suffer the innocent, childish heart of Hortense to become alienated from her father, or to forget the esteem and respect which as a daughter she owed to him. Josephine therefore never allowed any one to utter a word of blame against her husband in the presence of her daughter; she even imposed silence on her mother when, in the just resentment of a parent who sees her child suffer, she accused the man who had brought wretchedness on her Josephine, who at so early an age had taught her life's sorrows.

How joyous, beautiful, happy had her Josephine nearly ten years ago left her home, her country, her family, to go to a foreign land which attracted her with every thing which can charm a young girl—with the love of a young and beau-

tiful husband—with the luxury, the pleasures and festivities of Paris!

And now after ten years Josephine returned to her father's home, lonely, abandoned, unhappy, blighted with the mildew which ever deteriorates the character of a divorced woman; yet so young, with so many ruined hopes, with so many wounds in the heart!

Josephine's mother could not pardon him all this, and her countenance became clouded whenever the little Hortense spoke of her father. And the child spoke of him so often—for each evening and morning she had to pray God in his behalf—and when she asked her mother where her brother Eugene was, why he had not come with them to Martinique, Josephine answered her, he had remained with his father, who loved him so much, and who must have at least one of his children with him.

"Why then can he not, with Eugene, be with us?" asked the little Hortense, thoughtfully. "Why does he remain in that hateful, stony Paris, whilst he could live with us in the beautiful garden where so many charming flowers and so many large trees are to be found? Why is papa not with us, mamma?"

"Because he has occupations—because he cannot leave his regiment, my child," answered Josephine, carefully hiding her tears.

"If he cannot come to us, mamma, then let us go to him," cried the loving child. "Come, mamma, let us go on board a ship, and let us go to our dear papa, and to my dear brother Eugene."

"We must wait until your father sends for us, until he writes that we must come," said Josephine, with a sad smile. "Pray to God, my child, that he may soon do it!"

And from this time the child prayed God every evening that her father would soon send for her mother and for herself; and whenever she saw her mother receive a letter she

said: "Is it a letter from my papa? Does he write for us to travel and to come to him?"

One day Josephine was enabled to answer this question to her daughter with a proud and joyous yes.

Yes, the Viscount de Beauharnais had begged his wife to forget the past, and to come back to him. He had, with all the contrition of penitence, with the glow of an awakening love, prayed for pardon; he requested from her large-heartedness to be once more reunited to him who had despised, calumniated, and rejected her; he swore with sacred oaths to love her alone, and to keep to her in unbroken faithfulness.

At first Josephine received these vows with a suspicious, sorrowful smile; the wounds of her heart were not yet healed, the bitter experiences of the past were yet too fresh in her mind; and Madame de la Pagerie, Josephine's mother, repelled with earnestness every thought of reconciliation and reunion. She did not wish to lose her daughter a second time, and see her go to meet a dubious and dangerous happiness; she did not wish that Josephine, barely returned to the haven of rest and peace, should once more risk herself on the open, tempestuous ocean of life.

But the letters of the viscount were more and more pressing, more and more tender. He had completely and forever broken with Madame de Gisard; he did not wish to see her again, and henceforth he desired to be the true, devoted husband of his Josephine.

Josephine read these assurances, these vows of love, with a joyous smile, with a beating heart: all the crushed flowers of her youth raised up their blossoms again in her heart; she began again to hope, to trust, to believe once more in the possibility of happiness; she was ready to listen to her husband's call, and to hasten to him.

But her mother held her back. She believed not, she trusted not. Her insulted maternal heart could not forget



the humiliations and the sufferings which this man who now called for Josephine had inflicted upon her daughter. She could not pardon the viscount for having deserted his young wife, and that for the sake of a coquette! She therefore sought to inspire Josephine with mistrust; she told her that these vows of the viscount were not to be relied upon; that he had not given up his paramour to come back to Josephine, but that he was forsaken by her and abandoned by her. Madame de Gisard had regretted to be only the paramour of the Viscount de Beauharnais, and, as she could never hope to be his legitimate wife, she had abandoned him, to marry a wealthy Englishman, with whom she had left France to go with him to Italy.

At this news Josephine's head would sink down, and, with tears in her eyes and sorrow in her heart, she promised her mother no more to listen to the voice of a faithless husband; no more to value the assurances of a love which only returned to her because it was rejected elsewhere.

Meanwhile, not only the Viscount de Beauharnais prayed Josephine to return, but also his father the marquis claimed this from his beloved daughter-in-law; even Madame de Renaudin confirmed the entire conversion of Alexandre, and conjured Josephine to hesitate no longer once more to take possession of a heart which beat with so burning a sorrow and so longing a love toward her. She pictured to her, besides, how necessary she was to him; how much in these troublous and stormy days which had just begun, he was in need of a quiet haven of domestic life, there to rest after the labors and the conflicts of politics and of public life; how many dangers surrounded him, and how soon it might happen that he would need not only a household refuge but also a nurse who would bind his wounds and keep watch near the bed of sickness.

For the times of quietness were gone; the brand which the States-General had flung over France had lit a fire every-

where, in every city, in every house, in every head; and the flaming speeches of the deputies of the Third Estate only fanned the fire into higher flames.

The revolution was there, and nothing could keep back the torrent of blood, fire, enthusiasm, and hatred. Already the Third Estate had solemnly proclaimed its separation from Old France, from the ancient monarchy of the lilies, since that monarchy had abandoned the large assembly-hall where the States-General held their sessions, and in which the nobility and the clergy still imagined they were able to maintain the balance of power against the despised Third Estate. The *Tiers Etat* had, in the ballroom, converted itself into the National Assembly, and with enthusiasm had all these deputies of the third class sworn on the 17th of June, 1789, "never to part one from the other until they had given a constitution to France."

Alexandre de Beauharnais, deputy from Blois, had passed with his colleagues into the ballroom, had with them taken the fatal oath; in the decisive night of the 4th of August he, with burning enthusiasm, had renounced all the privileges of the nobility, all his feudal rights; and, breaking with the past, with all its family traditions and customs, had passed, with all the passion and zest of his nine-and-twenty years, into the hostile camp of the people and of liberty.

The revolution, which moved onward with such rash and destructive strides, had drawn Alexandre de Beauharnais more and more into its flood. It had converted the king's major into an enthusiastic speaker of the Jacobins, then into the secretary of the National Assembly, and finally into its president.

The monarchy was not yet powerless; it fought still with all the bitterness of despair, of the pains of death, against its foes; it still found defenders in the National Assembly, in the faithful regiments of the Swiss and of the

guards, and in the hearts of a large portion of the people. The passions of parties were let loose one against another; and Alexandre de Beauharnais, the president of the National Assembly, stood naturally in the first rank of those who were threatened by the attacks of the royalists.

Yes, Alexandre de Beauharnais was in danger! Since Josephine knew this, there was for her but one place which belonged to her, to which she could lay claim—the place at her husband's side.

How could she then have withstood his appeals, his prayers? How could she then have remained in the solitude and stillness of Martinique, when her husband was now in the fight, in the very struggle? She had, now that fate claimed it, either to share her husband's triumphs, or to bring him comfort if he fell.

The intercessions of her family, even the tears of her mother, could no longer retain Josephine; at the side of her husband, the father of her two children, there was her place! No one could deprive her of it, if she herself wished to occupy it.

She was entitled to it, she was still the wife of the Viscount de Beauharnais. The Parliament, which had pronounced its verdict against the demands of a divorce from the viscount, had, in declaring Josephine innocent, condemned her husband to receive into his house his wife, if she desired it; or else, in case she waived this right, to pay her a fixed annual income.

Josephine had parted voluntarily from her husband, since she had not returned to him, but had exiled herself with her father-in-law and her aunt in Fontainebleau; but she had never laid claims to nor received the income which Parliament had appointed. She had never assumed the rights of a divorced wife, but she retained still all the privileges of a married woman, who at God's altar had bound herself to her husband for a whole life, in a wedlock which,

being performed according to the laws of the Catholic Church, was indissoluble.

Now the viscount claimed his wife, and who dared keep her back if she wished to follow this call? Who could stand between husband and wife, when their hearts claimed and longed for this reunion?

The tears of Madame de la Pagerie had attempted it, but had not succeeded! The soft, patient, pliant Josephine had suddenly become a strong-minded, joyous, courageous woman; the inconveniences of a long sea-voyage, the perils of the revolution, into whose open crater she was to enter, affrighted her not. All the energies of her being began to develop themselves under the first sunbeams of a renewed love! The years of sorrow had passed away. Life, love called Josephine again, and she listened to the call, jubilant and full of friendly trust of undimmed hope!

In the first days of September, 1790, Josephine, with the little Hortense, embarked from Martinique, and after a short, favorable passage, landed in France, in the middle of October.\*

Again a prophecy accompanied Josephine to France, and perhaps this prophecy is to be blamed for her sudden departure and her unwavering resolution to leave Martinique. The old negro woman who, once before Josephine's departure, had prophesied that she would wear a crown and be more than a Queen of France—the old Euphemia was

\* If, in the work "Queen Hortense, an Historical Sketch from the Days of Napoleon," I have given a few different details of Josephine's return to France and to her husband, I have followed the error common to all the historians of that time, who represent Josephine returning despite her husband's will, who receives her into his house, and recognizes her as his wife, only at the instant supplication of his family, and especially of his children. It is only of late that all this has been satisfactorily refuted, and that it has been proved that Josephine returned only at the instance of her husband's pressing demands. See Aubenas, "Histoire de l'Impératrice Josephine," vol. I., p. 164.—L. M.

still living, and was still considered as an infallible oracle. A few days before her departure, Josephine, with all the superstitious faith of a creole, went to ask the old prophetess if her journey would be propitious.

The old Euphemia stared long and fixedly into Josephine's smiling countenance; then, as if overcome by a sudden thought, she exclaimed: "Go! go as fast as possible, for death and danger threaten you! Already are on the watch wicked and bloodthirsty fiends, who every moment are ready to rush among us with fire and sword, and to destroy the colony in their cruel wrath!"

"And shall I safely arrive in France?" asked Josephine. "Shall I again see my husband?"

"You will see him again," exclaimed the prophetess, "but hasten to go to him."

"Is he threatened with any danger?" demanded Josephine.

"Not yet!—not at once!" said the old negress. "They now applaud your husband and recognize his services. But he has powerful enemies, and one day they will threaten his life, and will lead him to the scaffold and murder him!"

Before Josephine left Martinique, a portion of these prophecies of the old negro woman were to be fulfilled. The wicked and bloodthirsty fiends, of whom she said they were ready with fire and sword to rush upon the colony—those fiends did light the firebrand and destroy the peace of Martinique.

The resounding cries for freedom uttered in the National Assembly, and which shook the whole continent, had rushed along across the ocean to Martinique. The storm-wind of the revolution had on its wings borne the wondrous story to Martinique—the wondrous story of man's sacred rights, which Lafayette had proclaimed in the National Assembly, the wondrous story that man was born free, that he ought

to remain free, that there were to be no more slaves in the land of liberty, in France, and in her colonies.

The storm-wind which brought this great news across the ocean to Martinique scattered it into the negro-cabins, and at first they listened to it with wondrous delight. Then the delirium of joy came over them; jubilant they broke their chains, and in wild madness anticipated their human rights, their personal freedom.

The revolution, with its terrible consequences of blood and horrors, broke loose in Martinique, and, exulting in freedom, the slaves threw the firebrand on the roof of their former masters, rushed with war's wild cry into their dwellings, and, in freedom's name, punished those who so long had punished them in tyranny's name.

Amid the barbaric shouts of those dark free men, Josephine embarked on board the ship which was to carry her and her little Hortense to France; and the flames which rose from the roofs of the houses as so many way-marks of fire for the new era, were Josephine's last, sad farewell from the home which she was never to see again.\*

## CHAPTER X.

### THE DAYS OF THE REVOLUTION.

HAPPINESS had once more penetrated into the heart of Josephine. Love again threw her sun-gleams upon her existence, and filled her whole being with animation and joy. She was once more united to her husband, who, with tears of joy and repentance, had again taken her to his heart. She was once more with her relatives, who, in the day of

\* Le Normand, "Mémoires de l'Impératrice Josephine," vol. i., p. 147.